



Cambridge EMPLOYMENT Chronicle 1888 to 1990

This will form part of *A Cambridge Chronicle*

1900

1903 03 26

Since the declaration of peace last year the ranks of the unemployed in Cambridgeshire have been swelled by the steady influx from South Africa of thousands of discharged soldiers and reservists which has seriously upset the labour market. One cannot pay a visit to the tramp ward of any Workhouse without being impressed by the number of inmates who are evidently returned “heroes”. In 1901 7,754 vagrants were relived at the various Unions in the district, last year the number had risen to 9,591. Cambridge spends the least per head – two shillings and three farthings – whilst Linton spends the most, six shillings and eightpence halfpenny. 03 03 26

1904

Corporation reject suggestion they should start work to aid unemployed [1.13]

1904 10 06

The coming winter will be one of the worst for the employment of labour known for many years. The building trade, so important to Cambridge, is the one most affected. The reason is in part the wave of depression that is sweeping over the whole industrial life of the country but also because Cambridge is rapidly becoming overbuilt. The conclusion of the new University buildings have also thrown a number of artisans upon the labour market. We have never known so many men out of work at this season of the year. One bright spot is that the three cement companies will provide work for some 350 men CDN 6.10.1904

1904 11 26

Distress is likely to be more acute in Cambridge this winter than for many years past owing principally to the slump in the building boom locally and the depression in trade generally. The Church Army has evolved a scheme through which married men may obtain work. A number of

tickets are issued to philanthropists who fill in the name of a married man in need of employment and offers to repay the Army one shilling towards the cost of employment. The man is found work wood chopping or log sawing and is paid about 2s.6d. a day. But the Home is now overloaded with the produce of its labour and there are 25,000 bundles of wood which must be sold to the public before it can continue. CDN 26.11.1904 [1.4]

1904 11 30

Cambridge Corporation has made arrangements to provide extra work at their stone-breaking yard with the object of relieving distress. The granite used for the roads is customarily brought here in its broken condition. Just now however much of it is being reduced to the requisite size at the stone-yard where they are prepared to employ any applicant who lives in Cambridge. The rate of payment is 3s.6d. for every cubic yard of granite broken and it is possible to earn about 14s weekly, enough to keep a man from actual starvation. But the pinch of want has not been keenly felt by the lower class of labourer at present for only one application has been received. 1904 11 30

1905 10 28

Building trade dull, "as soon as building ceases in Cambridge distress begins", but Corporation set aside work of great magnitude, trench for Cherry Hinton sewer, for winter season to aid unemployed [1.14]

1905 12 09

This distress this winter must be greater than usual; already 28 unemployed men have been found work at the Botanic Garden for four days a week for which they receive 10s. About 60 loads of compost have been prepared, leaves raked and much washing of glass accomplished. One man with heart disease has been found sitting-down work picking moss for orchid culture. Further men may be employed depending entirely upon contributions; the curator is willing to receive any sums for the Winter Employment Fund 05 12 09b

1906

Council seeks to join in Queens unemployment fund, building trade dull [1.5]

1906 10 30

Unemployment – 250 carpenters and joiners etc – 06 10 30b

1907 05 16

Not one Cambridge boy in 30 learns a trade; parents grasp at a few shillings as early as possible. Some were taken up by printers and the University offices but the most promising work was in the motor and cycle industry. One eleven-year old worked 28 hours a week outside school hours cleaning stables during the dinner hour, all Saturday and three hours on Sunday. Another, aged 14, put in 32 hours a week selling papers. They spent the money on food and cigarettes. 07 05 16 & a

1907 09 10

Post Office telegraph messenger boys are subject to a short drill every morning; they learn discipline, obedience and punctuality and can become members of the Albert Institute with its facilities for further education and sport. They must leave the job when aged 16 and have previously become postmen. But now half the vacancies have to be reserved for ex-servicemen and the Cambridge Postmaster has a list of boys ready for jobs in the outside world. 07 09 10

1907 12 28

The Somerset Winter Employment Fund has found work for 30 men at the University Botanical Garden. Some have been leaf raking, others clipping hedges, cutting trees or digging plantain out of grass. They were labourers, painters, carpenters and bricklayers, many of them with families dependent on them. Subscriptions have been received chiefly from members of the University but there is good reason more should come from townspeople – the garden is freely open to the public. 07 12 28a

1908 06 05

To the casual observer there seems a minimum of child labour in Cambridge so it is something of a shock to learn that 266 are engaged in some occupation out of school hours. Now no child may be employed as a lather boy in any barber's shop, nor in connection with the sale of intoxicating liquor on licensed premises, nor in billiard or bagatelle marking, nor in the kitchen of any hotel or refreshment room. Badges must be worn by those engaged in street trading for which a deposit of threepence will be charged, councillors decided. CWN 08 06 05 p7

1908 09 11

In Cambridge the University vacations continually throw many boys and men out of work and create a class of idle and useless men who live on their wives' earnings when they can, and at other times are destitute. Many women work as bedmakers but others can neither cook nor keep their houses tidy. Improvident early marriages between young men and women who have no savings to furnish a house, no experience to teach them economy and no solid mutual affection to help them bear hardship are the source of great and prolonged misery. CWN 08 09 11 p

1908 10 02

Although we are far removed from the din of industrial strife, the wave of depression that is sweeping over the trade of the country is making itself felt even in Cambridgeshire. What local industries we possess appear to be flourishing, labour on the land is fairly constant and the labour required by the colleges varies but little. But the number of people making use of the casual ward of Cambridge workhouses has been increasing with 818 vagrants during the previous fortnight as compared to 184 last year. CEN 08 10 02 p5

1911 03 24

Cambridge Labour Exchange to open – 11 03 24d

1911 03 31

The new Labour Exchange in Guildhall Street was visited by large numbers of people, most of whom contented themselves with scanning the red-boarded notices of situations vacant posted up in the windows. But about 40 applicants for work gave their names and some were at once notified of vacancies. Exchanges all over the country are linked up and the Cambridge office communicated by telephone with the Aberdeen Exchange to help a Scottish man find work. There are vacancies for motor repairers, electrical fitters and shorthand typists and a good demand for healthy men expert in pick and shovel work who are willing to go to Australia as railway labourers. 11 03 31e

1911 04 15

Day after Bank Holiday is busiest of year for pawnbrokers - due to loss of 3 days wages on Good Friday, Saturday & Monday [2.7] 6

1911 04 29

Labour Exchange opens Guildhall Street, moving to Regent Street in September; Aberdeen man one of first to use service, asks "why are there so many hard-working ... men on the scrapheap ... degradation & misery" [2.7, 2.9]

1911 06 06

The Cambridge offices of the Board of Trade Labour Exchange have been removed from Guildhall Street to Regent Street and the work of finding and filling vacant situations is going on smoothly. The site near Hyde Park Corner most convenient with larger rooms for men and women. Every effort is made to encourage applicants to make use of the office as a waiting room – not a smoke room – with daily papers and magazines where they may remain in the hope they will be the right person in the right place when a job turns up. 11 10 06

1912 06 28

The Unemployment Insurance Scheme provides for payment of contributions by all employers and workpeople in certain trades and for the payment of benefit to the workpeople when unemployed. In Cambridge it will be administered by the Labour Exchange in Regent Street who are distributing leaflets. The scheme covers house building, railway construction and shipbuilding – which applies to local boat builders – while ‘vehicle construction’ will include people repairing cars and bicycles. 12 06 28f

1914 12 11

Trade & employment in Cambridge have not been hit by the war. But with nearly 600 students missing, colleges that are hardest hit will be unable to keep on all their servants. Twenty per cent of builders are now out of work. Many women are employed in the jam factory at Histon and in the two knitting factories where War Office orders have provided more work than usual. Women have obtained posts vacated by men clerks who have gone to war but a large number of day girls are out of work owing to the plight of the lodging-house keepers. As these girls are in many cases the daughters of women who are themselves injured by the war, this state of affairs means a further depletion of an already scanty income. For good general servants there is a greater demand than supply, but there is very little demand for the services of any of the better class of servants and the number of between-maids out of employment is especially large. Hand laundresses have been very hard hit by the war. The great majority of these women are normally engaged in working for the colleges and, owing the stoppages of games, the amount of washing sent per man is much less this term. When the woman is the chief breadwinner of the family their position is extremely serious. The laundresses themselves are not in such a bad plight, for many have made considerable sums during the busy six months of the year and many of them have savings laid by. But only in very few cases have they got husbands in independent work. A large number of tailoresses are entirely unemployed and the remainder are working short time. Some have gone to Leeds to work making khaki uniforms and others will probably follow. The better class dressmakers seem more affected than the inferior ones. Business is slack just now and is expected to be much worse after Christmas when business is usually slack. The dressmakers and milliners’ hands employed in shops seem to be on short time. Here too the better class shops are worse hit than the cheapest establishments and several employees say they will be unable to keep their hands for a prolonged period without a considerable improvement. Shirt makers are busy at present but their usual work is almost entirely replaced by the making of shirts for officers’ outfits and there is apprehension that at the end of this term this work will be to a large extent cease 14 12 11

1919 02 19

Out of Work. We are very much concerned (says the writer of Town and Country Topics) at the announcement made to the Mayor last week-end that there are some 1,031 people out of employment at Cambridge. This is a very serious matter, and the question we should like to have decided at once is whether this unemployment is a matter of necessity or choice—in other words, whether it is due to lack of opportunities of work or is being fostered and maintained by the unemployment pay. We are disposed to believe that the latter is the case, especially with regard to the unemployment of women. Everywhere one hears of women being wanted in domestic service, but apparently the majority of them have made up their minds not to take up such service, except upon terms and conditions which they cannot seriously hope to obtain. We believe that the out of work pay is responsible for a good deal of the (existing) trouble and we hope and believe that the nation will insist upon a prompt and thorough revision of the situation. 19 02 19 CIPof

1919 08 27

Long vacation brings problems of seasonal unemployment; far-sighted men planned scheme for employment not dependent on University with industry and advertising Cambridge as holiday town. Town Planning Scheme formulated – feature – 19 08 27b

1920 02 20

Prince Albert visits Cambridge Labour Exchange & Unemployment centre - CDN 20 02 20

1920 07 09

Cinemas or houses – work wanted for unemployed, no skilled men are out of work; cinema could be finished before any housing scheme would be ready and men had pledged to leave any work for housing when needed - CDN 20 07 09

1920 12 22

Two new roads to make work unemployed – from Cherry Hinton Road to Mill Road (near huts to Brookfields) and from The Grove, Newnham to Trumpington Road via Coe Fen Lane – 22 12 22b

1920 12 29

Disabled ex-servicemen employment, 18 men being trained in tailoring, 12 each in jewellery, clock repairing and carpentry, 40 in diamond-cutting; photos in English Leather Co boot repairers and man driving traction engine – Ch 20 12 29a

1921 09

Deputation to Mayor and Guardians of the Poor, within a week they start scheme which employ 263 men [1.7]

1921 09 17

721 unemployed [2.4]

1921 10 12

‘Cambridge Unemployed’ – Labour Party demonstration Parker’s Piece – photos – 21 10 12b

1922 01 14

Unemployment Committee opens soup kitchen at back of Barnwell theatre [2.2]

1922 04 08

The designs of Cambridge town council to provide work for the unemployed by the construction of a road between Cherry Hinton and Newmarket road which had the sanction of the authorities have so far failed owing to what on the face of it appears to be a squabble between the committees concerned and the owners of property affected. It is high time something was done as at the present rate of delay - two winters have passed and a commencement has not yet been made - the unemployment crisis will be over before a pick or shovel has been set going. Meanwhile approaching £200 a week of ratepayers money is being spent upon relieving destitution caused by lack of work in Cambridge - "Table Talk" 22 04 08

1922 05 10

T.A. Reavell, the manager of the Cambridge Labour Exchange is leaving. The Deputy Divisional Controller from the Ministry explained that in the interests of economy two of the large divisional offices had been closed and posts had to be found for the officials. Mr Almond felt it was but a sample of the high-handed and autocratic system which prevailed in which Ministers were now permitted to over-ride and interpret Acts of Parliament according to their own idea. This was seconded by Mr Shadbolt on behalf of the workers panel and echoed by the Master of Downing, chairman of the Local Employment Committee 22 05 10

1922 05 15

Sir. Cambridge is a University town, supposed to respect and consider its inhabitants. My husband served with his Majesty's Forces abroad for four years. He has been unemployed nearly two years and willing for any kind of work. His labour dole now being finished, and I myself not being able to work to keep our home going, he was forced to apply to the Guardians for relief and was told this morning that relief could not be granted but that he could have a ticket to go into the Workhouse. Is this the reward our men receive for all they have done? - letter from An Ex-Serviceman's Wife 22 05 15

1922 11 06

The Central Committee on Women's Training and Employment hope to open a centre in Eden Street, Cambridge, for training girls in all branches of women's work including cookery, laundry, housewifery and health subjects. It is believed that many girls are prevented from taking up domestic work through lack of the money to buy the necessary outfit. In their needlework classes they will make their uniform and at the end of the training each girl will be completed with a complete uniform. The period of training is generally 13 weeks and the chance which this course gives to unemployed girls to make a fresh start is one which may not recur, and which should not lightly be refused 22 11 06

1922 12 08

The urgent need for carrying out schemes of public importance in order to relieve the unemployment situation in the Borough were admitted on all hands at the meeting of the Cambridge Town Council. During the past two years they had been endeavouring as far as possible each winter to find work for those men who unfortunately were out of employ. Last year they were able to place 200 men on the Sewage Farm. That work had nearly come to a close. It was stated that there were 800 men out of work in the Borough which was an increase of nearly 100 over last year. Suggestions for further work included underground lavatories at the junction of Victoria Road, Chesterton Road and Milton Road, a bridge across the Cam at the bottom of Walnut Tree Avenue and a recreation ground on the Rock Estate 22 12 08

1922 12 09

Council start construction of road from Cherry Hinton Road to Mill Road to make work [2.3]

1923 05

Men employed doing relief work strike as they are not getting Trade Union rates [1.8]

1923 09

Coe Fen road scheme agreed to provide work for unemployed [1.9]

1923 10 04

Under the Government's immigration scheme, the Cambridge Juvenile Unemployment Bureau has sent out to Australia five boys. The first of these has return home a interesting letter in which he says: "It is a pleasure to me to write and tell you my experiences in Aussie, and if you are the means of inducing any other young fellow to come to the land of sunshine, it would please me more. J. and I have stuck together. We were in the same cabin in the boat, which held eight bunks. Ours was a slow boat. It took us over two months to reach Australia. I have been at Moss Vail over 10 months and am never short of a few pounds. I think it is a pity that more boys do not come from Cambridge. You have such a number of unemployed. Of course one has to work fairly hard but work has done me a power of good. I would not hesitate one minute to recommend any young fellow to come to Australia 23 10 04

1924 12 06

There is considerably less unemployment in Cambridge. The figures at the Labour Exchange show that last year there were 806 on the live register and today it is 490. There are 200 men on relief work and the Committee have five jobs on which they could start in the near future as a means of absorbing men who might become unemployed through other work ceasing. 24 12 06

1925

Unemployment grants committee contribute £320 towards labour on Jesus Green sports ground [NI.1.17]

1926 08 28

Sir – Probably the hardest-worked and the poorest paid college servant is the kitchen porter. In full term he puts in from 13 to 14 hours a day and at the end of the week if he draws 25s. (£1.12) (his food included) he may consider himself lucky – and perhaps the less said about the quality of some of the food the better. They get few tips – an average of 4s. (20p) a term, and perhaps nothing, and in all probability have to stand off during the Long Vacation. These men are honest and trusted servants who should be paid a living wage – A British Worker 26 08 28

1926 08 30

Sir – the average wages of porters in college kitchens before the war were about ten or eleven shillings per week of 85 hours. At that time they got more money in tips than now. I have known many kitchen hands whose pay per hour worked out at three-farthings to a penny. Today they have a pension scheme (I believe at 65) but few live to that age. Some of the humane employers now pay wages during Vacations having come to the conclusion that an employee wanted something to eat, even when resting in the purer air of Parker's Piece – A.D. Somme 26 08 30

1926 12 09

Opening of Coe Fen Road. Mayor & Corporation arrived on bus, 'project of relieving Silver Street traffic & making better communication between Newnham & town started as long ago as 1904. In 1923 plans approved, had been nine different proposals; 'if not for urgency of the unemployment question we should be in the same position today only instead of nine there would have been 19 schemes. It was built as 'employment job', 90 unemployed men had been found work on scheme. Public enquiry held Feb 1924, work started May 1924. Had been considerable opposition – 'ugly & spoil amenities of Coe Fen & Sheeps Green - but this some monstrosity they had conjured up'

1928 05 17

Undergraduates were packed like sardines in a tin at the Cambridge Police court when King's College and Trinity College were fined for employing male servants with having in force licences as required. It was unthinkable that such bodies should attempt to evade payment but they had received no reminder from the County Hall. This was not an acceptable excuse: they were large and responsible bodies accustomed to regularly employing a number of servants and should be more scrupulous than ordinary citizens to see the duties were paid in proper time. 28 05 17

1929 01 18

There are about 800 unemployed men in Cambridge, due to seasonal work and the closing down of the Cement Works, one of which had closed permanently though the others would reopen in a short time. They include 84 builders' labourers, 138 painters, 32 carpenters and 16 plasterers. The council has drawn up a programme and 134 men are working for the Borough Surveyor but they urge all who had work for painters, plasterers or builders to put it in hand at once. 29 01 18

1929 10

A programme of work approved which would give employment to 250 men for 12 months at cost of £108,263 & is submitted for Government approval [1.11]

1929 10 12

Cambridge did not become a munitions-manufacturing area on the outbreak of the Great War. The consequence was that its full quota of men joined the ranks and left the district. Now, ten years after the Armistice, we are being reminded that hundreds of baby boys and girls did not come into the world at all. There is now a real lack of errand boys with 60 employers seeking them. This will create a serious position for shopkeepers in years to come. About 100 domestic vacancies for girls are also waiting to be filled. If the school-leaving age is raised the difficulties will be increased. CDN
12.10.1929

1930

1930 07 05

The policy of building more rooms in college and drawing in as many men from the lodging houses is creating a serious outlook for the lodging-house keepers. Many have been told their rooms will not be required next term. If the University cannot continue to utilise services which came into existence to serve their needs some then other employment will be needed. If the University ceases to provide adequate support Cambridge will have no alternative but to seek other means of livelihood. We will be loath to see the town industrialised but people must live. 30 07 05b

1930 07 12

Work has started on the provision of a model yacht pond and paddling pool as part of an extensive scheme for the improvement of Sheep's Green. This is one of numerous schemes for providing work for the unemployed and when operations are in full swing about 70 men will be employed. The Ladies' and Men's Bathing Place will also be extended 30 07 12b

1930 07 25

Cambridge councillors have received consent for a new road from Milton Road to Histon Road at a cost of £18,135. St John's College would give the land which was required for housing purposes, it would be one of the best estates and the frontages would sell at very high price. Grants have been received for King's Hedges and Green End Road as part of the unemployment scheme with one-third of the labour being imported from the distressed areas. 30 07 25d

1930 10 17

New stone paving laid parallel to Queens Road [2.5]

1930 11 14

Great anxiety is being felt by Cambridge's 2,000 railway employees over the Companies drastic proposals on rates of pay and conditions of service. The tobacco and other luxury trades were affected at the time they accepted a reduction in wages to ease the companies' financial difficulties temporarily but this would have a serious impact on the spending power of a large number of relatively high-salaried men. Coming at a time when trade enterprise in Cambridge is approaching its zenith and the University is being appealed to for commercial support the prospects may be regarded with concern. 30 11 14

1931 08 21

Sir – what prospects are there here for a healthy, ambitious man anxious to get on. The colleges are nice to look at but not much use in finding employment for men with growing families to clothe. The nearest factory is Chivers and when one sees the cleanliness of Histon and signs of prosperity and happiness of the villagers one marvels at how anyone who has to work for their daily bread can like Cambridge where the majority of local men are underpaid and discontented – 'King without a castle' 31 08 21k

1932

Cambridge people rally to government call to sell gold, jewellery & trinkets to help national financial crisis: "This is a time to spend ..." get local cash flowing as an aid to unemployment; "buy new clothes, furniture or extra food. Have your house decorated or painted. A prompt response to this appeal will lift thousands of homes from misery into happiness by Christmas [32.1]

1932

Suicides on increase caused by unemployment; mayors appeal for jobless gathers £1,122 within two weeks; money devoted to creating work schemes put forward by Borough surveyor offering employment to 68 men in alternate weeks; new road started from Cherry -Hinton Road to Coldham's Lane [1.2]

1932 09 30

Members of the National Unemployed Workers' Movement organised a meeting opposite a house in New Street, Cambridge in the interests of a resident who was threatened with eviction. The man was a rag and bone dealer with two children whose application for relief from the Public Assistance Committee had been refused on the grounds that he was not starving. A Defence Committee was formed to oppose his ejection and a demonstration will be arranged on Parker's Piece 32 09 30bb (picture 32 09 30d)

1932 09 31

Thirteen unemployment relief schemes being carried out; includes new road from Cherryhinton Road to Coldham's Lane [1.2]

1932 12 16

About 1,400 men are unemployed in Cambridge but there were plenty of jobs to be done by unskilled labourers. The Mayor proposed a subscription fund to pay for work over the Christmas people. The alternative was to levy a special rate for the relief of unemployment – it would save spending money on benefit. But there were hundreds of people who had the hardest difficulty in meeting the existing rates – some going without food. 32 12 16b & c

1933

Master Builders & Decorators advert: "Do you realise that 1,653 able-bodied men are totally unemployed in your own town. Do you realise that of this appalling total 543 men are of the building trade". Help the unemployed by spending money on home improvement [1.1]

1933 02 03

The Mayor, (Ald Mrs Keynes) expressed her appreciation for the support her fund for providing work for the unemployed is receiving. There are 1,600 unemployed men in Cambridge but 120 who have done no work for a year are now making the path on Long Road and levelling Coldham's Common. Another 80 will level the building ground in Brook's Road and the site of the new school and playground in Gilbert Road. 33 02 03e

1933 05 22

Unemployment situation – 33 05 22

1933 10 21

The club for unemployed men at Fellowship House, Fitzroy Street has been renovated by members and now present a very cost appearance. It has a club room and canteen, a workroom fitted with benches at which men do woodwork and picture framing, a concert and lecture room complete with a piano purchased for three shillings, and a ping-pong and billiards room. During the war the Welsh troops had used it as a cookhouse, later it became a brush factory and furniture store but no better use could possibly be made of it. 33 10 21

1933 10 20

Unemployment in Cambridge is serious: 965 men and 84 women were out of work. The University Library was nearly finished and the great building projects in the town completed. But work continued on Queen Edith's Way, Long Road and the Hundred Houses Estate as well as the paddling pool on Coldham's Common. The Minister of Transport was keen to do away with level crossings and replace them with bridges; this could mean serious expenditure but provide employment for a great number of men. 33 10 20

1933 11 26

Collins' Agency, High-Class Registry for Servants at 55 Regent Street has been established in Cambridge for over 28 years and now has offices in Bridge Street, at Peterborough and Chelmsford. The extent of the business is shown by the fact that in 1937 more than 1,500 ladies were suited with maids in spite of the great dearth of servants. Collins' Agency advertisements regularly appear in Cambridge newspapers 38 11 26

1935 02 25

An open-air demonstration under the red flag against the new Unemployment Bill was held on Parker's Piece supported by the University Socialist Society and Labour Clubs. A crowd of nearly 100 assembled. There are two-and-a-half million registered unemployed but there had been an increase in production without an increase in wages. The worker had become the slave of the machine, not the machine the tool of the worker. Mr H.C. Bibby spoke on camps for the unemployed: many who took part had the best of motives but they could develop into terrible concentration camps. 35 02 25

1936 03 06

Byelaws that prevented children doing agricultural work for more than four hours a day during school holidays were a hardship for farmers – they could not even employ their own sons to help with the harvest. But one 13-year old boy had worked in the harvest field from eight in the morning to eight at night, six days a week, for a full harvest, and was paid the magnificent sum of twelve shillings. The farmer did not put his own children in the harvest field – would they allow their own children to do that? Councillors agreed to allow children to be employed in light agricultural work, not involving heavy strain, for up to nine hours during the summer holidays. 36 03 06b

1936 11 02

Undergraduates demonstrated support for 130 hunger marchers from Durham on their way to London to protest against the Means Test and new scales of benefit. At Girton College girl students served them tea and buns before 250 undergraduates joined the procession carrying torches and banners. There were meetings in the Co-operative and Labour Halls before the protestors had an evening meal in the students' rooms. At Cheshunt College some of the marchers ate in hall. Having slept in the Corn Exchange they continued to Saffron Walden where the Labour Party entertained them with lively tunes from a loudspeaker van. The march is due to arrive in London next weekend. 36 11 02 & a

1939-48

Central Government increase employment by 350% at 'Butlins', Brooklands Avenue (due to establishment of regional government during war)

1940

1947 08 06

Only in cases of "exceptional hardship" can private householders hope to employ in domestic service the displaced persons now coming into the area to help relieve the labour shortage in certain industries. Since the beginning of June some 1,400 of these displaced persons have arrived from Germany at a West Wrattling holding camp. Their nationalities are Latvian, Lithuanian, Estonian and Ukranian. Ages range from 25 to 40. The jobs woman can take include laundry work, domestic service in hospitals and hostels, and agriculture, and these are the sort of jobs they have taken in this region. Men, too have gone into agriculture. I understand that another camp accommodating about the same number will shortly be opened in Bottisham 47 08 06

1950

1950 05 03

Central Government employment up 350% at 'Butlins', Brooklands Avenue; manufacturing up 40% on average (in some cases 180%). Going to make employment difficult for returning men "unless all go to 'Butlins'" [1.10]

1952 02 04

Nearly 1,000 college servants in Cambridge are being urged to join a trade union – and enjoy the benefits of a first-ever "College Servants' Charter" as a result of the Industrial Disputes Tribunal

decision affecting more than 80 workers at Gonville and Caius college. Circulars are going out from the Transport and General Workers' Union to college employees, including bedmakers, cleaners, porters and gardeners impressing on them the importance of "getting together". Since the wage claim at Caius was first submitted individual pay has gone up in some cases by as much as £1 12.6. a week. A kitchen porter now gets £4.15s.0d. minimum, a maximum of £5. A buttery man who received £5 now gets £6.7s.6d. There has been a £1 a week increase for cooks. 52 02 04

1956 05 12

The Cambridge Employment Exchange at Newnham used to be a school and the exterior is a little drab. But inside an astounding transformation has taken place. Now it is bright and pleasant, with pastel shades and the setting up of cubicles in which business may be conducted with a welcome degree of privacy. The Women's Section too has been decorated. 56 05 12

1956 11 22

Several hundred civil servants at Brooklands Avenue will be out of work as a result of the Government's decision to close down this regional centre. Nine departments will be affected and only a very small nucleus will be retained at the site. It is more economic to have them operate from London. Cambridge sprang up as a Regional Centre during the last war. 56 11 22

1959 04 07

Employment exchange offices move to Brooklands Avenue, at Newnham for nearly 30 years after move from Regent St; 1st set up under Labour Exchange Act 1909, with extension of Unemployment Insurance Scheme & resettlement following WWI work of exchange increased tremendously & local district offices set up to help; at present only 340 men & 67 women unemployed in Cambridge area; 27 years ago 1,500 registered, July 1938 1,400; since war average monthly figures varied 188 in 1951 & 539 last year [14.1]

1959 04 07

The Employment Exchange which has been sited in Newnham for nearly 30 years is moving to Brooklands Avenue. It provides a register of people seeking professional, managerial and senior executive posts and employees wishing to fill such vacancies. Nearly 200 men and women as well as ex-officers from HM Forces are included. The passports department and National Service registration office will also be affected. 59 04 07

1957 04 26

The Appointments Board in Chaucer Road is the undergraduates' "labour exchange". The Secretary, J.G. Davies interviews 1,500 students every year, some after they have done National Service or after a year's not-to-successful search on their own. A small intake, a dozen each year, go into atomic research where the standards are very high. There is a demand for mathematicians because of the development of automatic computers and economic analysis in Government offices but a desperate shortage of teachers specialising in science 57 04 26

1960

1961 06 13

Unemployment in Cambridge 0.4% (national average 1.3%) [3.1]

1963 11 25

Several Cambridge colleges have increased the wages of their bedmakers. At Jesus, where unrest led to union meetings, they have risen from two-shillings and tenpence to three-and-six an hour (about £3.10 at today's prices). Members of the kitchen staff have been given one free Sunday in three, a substantial improvement on their previous situation. But the question of overtime rates remains in dispute. St Catharine's and Selwyn have also raised wages 63 11 25b

1970

1972 01 07

Referendum of change of wage negotiations, Cambridge University Assistants oppose ASTMS claim to share bargaining, vote is a tie; NALGO & NUPE start; 22.5% increase agree non-technical grades - cleaners etc; CU formally recognise Trade Union for wage bargaining [19.8]

1973 02 26

“High cost of living & shortage & cost of accommodation together with dearth of ordinary entertainment facilities are creating a shortage of labour” [3.3]

1973 07 24

“Job glut for school leavers - 17 vacancies for every unemployed school leaver” [3.4]

1975 12 02

Jobcentre opens in Guildhall Place [3.5]

1976 02 02

Because of its low unemployment figure Cambridge is a labour-importing city. Up to £3,000 worth of government grants could be given to a man and his family in an area of high unemployment to persuade them to live and work here. The new Jobcentre in Guildhall Place has aptly been described as a job supermarket. An inviting window display tempts people into the well-carpeted warmth. The centre employs 26 people who find their work far more enjoyable now than ever they did in the days of the Labour Exchange 76 02 02

“Cambridge has lowest rate of unemployment in country, 2,343 unemployed [3.6]

1976 07 15

“500 city area school leavers could be jobless” [3.7]

1976 09 08

ACUA wins recognition of TU, not affiliated TUC [19.10]

1979 01 26

Attempts are being made by Cambridge's ‘dirty jobs’ strikers to close a number of city schools in support of their £60 a week minimum pay claim. Hundreds of workers are on strike. Householders are being urged to take their own refuse to the Coldham's Lane refuse tips as collections have been suspended indefinitely during the pay dispute. There were several minor accidents as drivers faced treacherous roads made worse by the overnight freeze and the supply of salt for roads is almost exhausted. Yesterday the Botanic Garden recorded 4½ inches of snow – the biggest fall since 1963.

79 01 26

1979 05 02

Spillers close Sleaford St bakers, 200 jobs lost; adds to crisis with R.H. Smart builders & Pye Engineering Services 79 05 02 & 5.3.1979

1980

1980 11 10

400 in rally to highlight youth unemployment [3.8]

1981 09 03

Marks and Spencer's newly-extended Cambridge store includes a roof garden for staff. A three-course lunch in the staff canteen (with flowers on the table), costs 10p. A shampoo and set is £1.25 and a visit to the chiropodist costs 50p. There is a staff medical room and a dentist calls every six months to check teeth. Wages are not high – though the £64.50 a week gross pay for a full-time sales assistant is above the average - but there is a pension and profit-sharing scheme 81 09 03

1982 12 16

Many of the 500 hard core of youngsters at present on the dole in the Cambridge area will probably never have jobs, a Careers Officer says. "We are writing off a generation; at one school three out of 100 wanted to go to work, the rest were going into further education". Youth Opportunities courses in electronic and mechanical engineering have only four applicants for 22 places as youngsters don't want to do them. They prefer outdoor work, such as building labouring. 81 12 16

1983 02 21

Cambridge unemployment at 6% is half national average and better than Northern towns with 20%, Thatcher says this due to success in harnessing brains and talents in University for new projects which can be made so helping to create new jobs - eg Science Park [1.6]

1985 01 21

Skilled technicians, computer programmers and systems analysts are now at a premium in Cambridge and are being bought and sold like footballers between firms who pay transfer fees to get the staff they want. The Itec centre in Hooper Street is making a small dent in the problem by taking youngsters with no formal qualifications and training them on technical subjects. Of 28 taken on so far, all but one have got good jobs. 85 01 21a

1985 12 02

The Andrew Murden Centre for the Unemployed and Unwaged is not just for the bored and depressed. Its main aims are to give advice on welfare rights and organise activities to stop people going stale in body and mind. But too few of Cambridge's 4,000 jobless are aware of it. The Centre would like more women to make use of the crèche and to expand their work with schools and youth groups. But there is not significant youth unemployment and the few out of work often join Government training schemes. 85 12 02c

1987

Midsummer Glassmakers quits, cannot recruit new staff due house prices [NS.1.6]

1987 09 11

Crisis finding staff, jobs at all levels begging with recruiting campaigns in Liverpool etc; problems cheap housing for people taking low-paid jobs (but specify age, ability, skills etc) ¢CEN 11.9.87)

1987 09 11

NHS scheme help low-paid staff buy houses ¢CEN 11.9.87

1988 06 25

Co-op say acute shortage in retail trade staff, need to bus staff in ¢CEN 25.6.88

1988 07 14

Unemployment under 3% - "full employment" ¢CEN 14.7.88

1988 08 19

A major staff crisis is threatening to cripple Cambridge's service industries. Firms are desperate to recruit but cannot get the people they need. The problem is deepest in the lower-pay sector where sky-high property prices and soaring cost of living are deterring potential workers from applying for jobs. The Health Authority has acute problems getting domestic, catering and nursing auxiliaries as well as clerical staff. The city has achieved 'full employment' with only three per cent jobless. 88 08 19

1988 11 26

Shops hit by staff crisis, hundreds of retail jobs going begging at Xmas ¢CEN 26.11.88

1989 04 07

“East Anglian salaries need to rise 27% to keep pace inflation” ¢CEN 7.4.89

1989 04 20

City council staffing crisis - poor pay & severe work pressure ¢CEN 20.4.89

1989 06 08

County Durham officials try to attract Cambridge firms to North ¢CEN 8.6.89

1989 09 22

The Cambridge bedmaker might be an endangered species. Many potential bedders are being wooed by supermarket and ‘Yuppie’ couples prepared to pay above-average rates for a suitable cleaner. There are almost permanent advertisements but they attract fewer applicants. The standard rate is £2.75 an hour, around 50p less than that offered privately. Bedmakers usually work a 20-hour week though with the current shortages many take on more hours. But there are bonuses during the conference season and regular chats with the fellows make the job different each day 89 02 22a & b

1989 11 01

Topexpress, Science Park axes 20 jobs ¢CEN 1.11.89